

5th
Year

Anniversary Issue!

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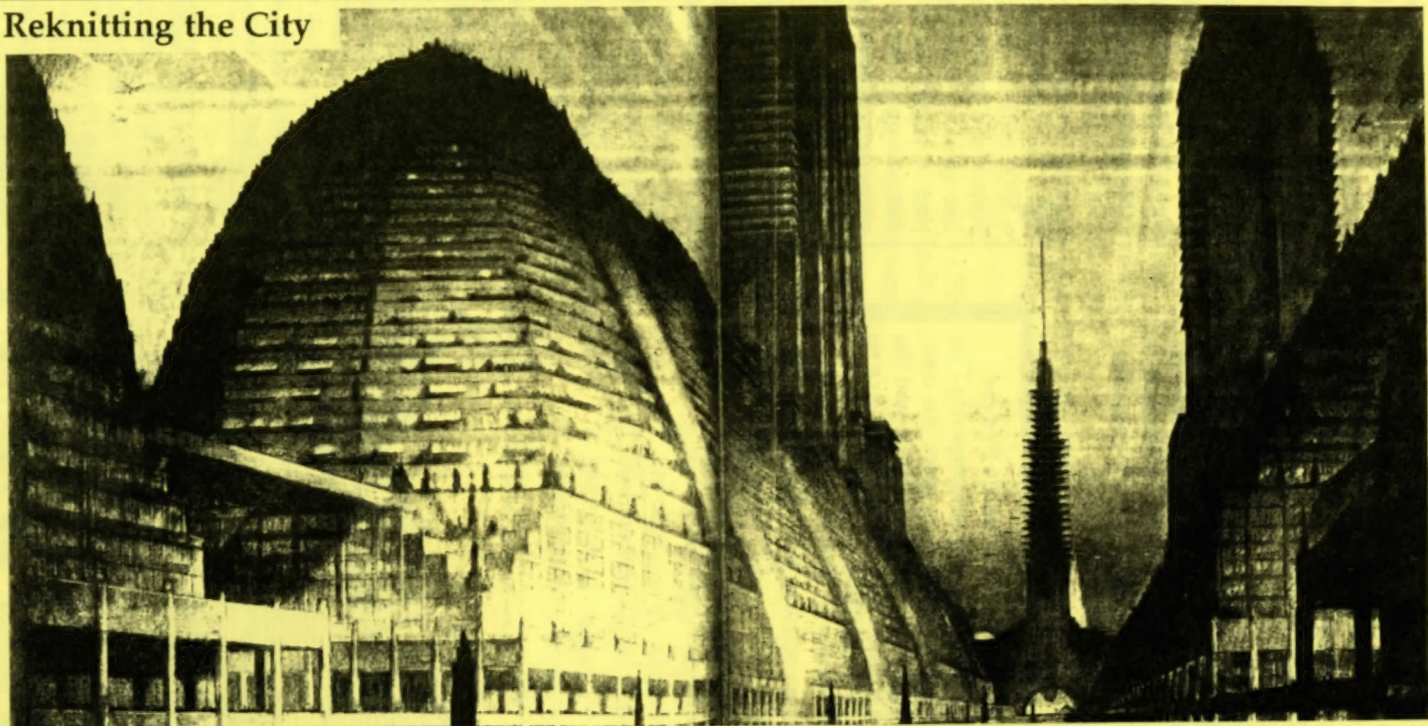
THE BOSTON INFORMER

No. 30

The truly highbrow rag for people who can read

April 1, 1997

Reknitting the City



MassPike Unveils Newbury Street Air Rights Plan—Bolstered by recent meetings at which neighborhood groups, the city council, state representatives and abutters lamented the "scar" caused by the Turnpike Extension, MassPike officials released a proposal it says will unify the separated neighborhoods. The proposal was presented in the green plastic bus shelter on Massachusetts Avenue, recently designated historic.

Plans call for a massive development that will have almost no traffic impact because living and working spaces will be combined under one roof. Business quarters will be in the lower 10 floors with living quarters in the floors above. Two towers will contain elevators and landing stages for airplanes. Elevators, not cars, will take people from home to work, eliminating auto traffic. However, MassPike will collect tolls on elevators for a sure revenue stream. When questioned about the project's scale and its blocking sunlight at the nearby Fenway Studios, MassPike said "knitting the city together" with this plan includes moving the 100-year-old Fenway Studios into one of the project's exterior quarters where there is an abundance of natural light.



Convention Center—In a move to keep the convention center afloat, Massport has proposed using the Black Falcon Terminal at the Reserved Channel in South Boston as the base of operations for the Queen Mary and the John F. Kennedy Aircraft Carrier as the convention center of choice. The aircraft carrier could also be used as a floating casino with conventioners staying on the Queen Mary for the duration of the conventions.

Top figures in Boston's hospitality business were somewhat askance at these ideas, but World Trade Center advisors were urging shift approval. An alternative convention center docking location, the East Boston Piers, was proposed by consultants eager to do yet another piers reuse study. Chelsea Creek as a docking location was also suggested.

Air Rights Cause Concern for Air Rights

NikeTown, that Newbury Street store where you can spend \$200 on a pair of sneakers, has concern over the patent rights for air in its new "swoosh" in Nike Air shoes since the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority started its quest for Air Rights development with the proposed Reebok shoe store project at Massachusetts Avenue, Pronation Palace. Some have suggested that MassPike could have Air Lefts, but the current Administration abhors lefts and the traffic analysis said this could be confusing to drivers.

Also, as it appears the shoe industry views Boston as the city of the disalced, there is talk of Bruno Magli setting up a multi-screen, multi-level, multi-event resort on the MassPike air rights. Indebted to OJ Simpson for making him a household word, Bruno Magli would include a golf course in the resort complete with large video screens that periodically would show 32 images of the key evidence in OJ's civil trial, the star himself in Bruno Magli shoes.

▲ **Surface Boulevard nears completion**—Despite being hit by cost-containment measures in the third version of NASTEA (formerly ISTE), the long-awaited Surface Boulevard of the Central Artery Project will soon be done. Some utilities were forced to be placed above ground and all street trees were deferred. Urban designers lamented the lack of signage controls because MassPike, owners of the Central Artery, are not subject to local zoning. However, pundits note the surface boulevard is a thriving destination, not a wasteland, due in part to privatization that has brought on firms such as Yoshihara Construction.

What They're Saying

"No one calls me."

Trudy Coxe, secretary, Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

"Climate has very little to do with it."

David Passafaro, Mayor Menino's chief of staff on why people would prefer to be at a convention in the snow and slush in Boston and not in a warm, sunny, state with a theme park.

"Some of the more intense type of maintenance we always do, but litter is something we expect the volunteer groups and the private sector to take care of."

Mass. Highway Commissioner Kevin Sullivan

"We already have a Logan people mover—it's spelled B-U-S."

Matt Coogan, former state transportation official

"If ever there was an example of a transit planner asked at the last minute to make the best of a bad situation, it the people mover at Logan." and "We already have a Logan people mover—it's spelled B-U-S."

Matt Coogan, former state transportation official

"Menino says BRA should have some control over projects within city limits."

The Boston Globe

1 The Boston Redevelopment Authority, in an effort to provide much-needed hotel rooms in the downtown, has approved 52 hotel projects in the last eight months. The 52 separate hotels, to be in virtually all parts of the downtown, Back Bay, Dudley Square, Charlestown and City Point in South Boston, will add about 19,300 new hotel rooms.

Industry experts predict marketing, discount rates and premiums will be used by most to "carve out that market niche" in a competitive market. (Not all projects shown).

The Boston Motorist's Prayer

Grant me the serenity to accept that I am not likely to find a parking space, the courage to fight for one if I find it, and the wisdom to know when it is time to give up and go to a parking garage.

2 The Boston Parks Department has submitted an application for ISTEA funds for a new plaza in front of the Boston Public Library McKim Building on Dartmouth Street. Plans for the area, strangely named Dartmouth Plaza, include closing the southbound part of Dartmouth Street in front of the building and creating a "skateboard park," a monument commemorating the invention of the bathtub in Boston and a small Ferris Wheel.

3 The recent decision to cancel plans for a \$300 million "people mover" at Logan Airport and instead build an elevated structure opens up fitness opportunities for Massport. A recent passenger survey revealed that passengers complained there's too much sitting around and inactivity at Logan Airport even before boarding the plane. Massport's redesigned people mover, is an elevated moving sidewalk that will allow people to walk from the parking garages, Blue Line and terminals. Passengers will benefit from an aerobic workout while Massport will cut emissions and costs. Fitness guru Susan Powter will offer fitness tips on the moving sidewalk.

To respond to a growing number of calls for speed bumps and humps, the Boston Transportation Department is telling callers that although the city has a policy against speed bumps/humps, the department will accommodate their request for traffic calming. Transportation Department officials inform callers that as a result of their complaint, the city will not repair any potholes on their street. That will slow traffic.

Boston recently submitted its formal application to host the Summer Olympic Games in 2008. In the application, the Boston Organizing Group United for Sports (BOGUS), stated that because of the Central Artery/Tunnel project, venues for many events would be easy to identify. For example, track and field sprints could be run on the abandoned elevated Central Artery; platform diving from the new Charles River Bridge; beach volleyball and the equestrian events from the lush new MDC Charles River parkland. New events include: distance swimming to the new convention center on Spectacle Island, a double marathon with the finish line in Providence Patriots stadium; and "pulling the cable" on the Charles River cable-stayed bridge still under construction.

Olympic athletes would be housed close to the downtown venues, in buildings such as Harbor Towers, Rows Wharf condos, the Leather District, and Fort Point Channel lofts, all virtually abandoned during the seven-year Central Artery construction.

The Boston Informer wonders...how come they said building the Logan People would cost \$300 million, but not building it would save \$400 million?



Headlines you'll never read...

- Massport opens Hanscom Field to New York shuttles and commuter airlines
- Boston picks Olympic Stadium site before Boston Olympic games begin
- State postpones Central Artery project until North Station—South Station Rail Link built
- Sec. Kerasiotes states Rail Link will do more to alleviate traffic congestion than Central Artery project
- State takes over Harvard University
- City adds Spring Lane to Boulevard Project
- MWRA considers lowering rates by reducing size of pipes
- WalkBoston hired as consultant to Boston Transportation Department
- NAACP gives award to MBTA
- Registry of Motor Vehicles eliminates lines—closes offices, substitutes roving Winnebago offices set up at truck weigh stations and McDonald's drive-throughs
- Custom House Tower gets digital clock faces
- Public Works responds to calls for bike lanes by converting the righthand lane at local bowling lanes to bike lanes
- Auditor says too little spent on Big Dig
- JFK Building converts upper stories to timeshare
- The Boston Informer wins Pulitzer Prize

Registrar of Suffolk Probate Court Richard Ianella, taking over the task of sorting Boston's flotsam and jetsam, has found valuables including the weapon from the Simpson-Goldman murders, a 30-year-old unreleased report rejecting plans for a Congress Street pedestrian bridge, and original 18th-century plans for a convention center in Boston.

Discovered by a worker who thought they were football plays, the plans were drawn by famed 19th century architect and mayor of Boston Charles Bulfinch. A note from Bulfinch states that he spared nothing in the design, assuming large city contributions, and that his fee was low because he knew his children would be getting jobs at the center.



Privatization Request for Proposals (RFP) announced:

With a strong sweep of hand, the Weld Administration has suggested a total privatization of all its public agencies and bodies. Leading the list was a move to privatize Administration and Finance functions and have them operated by one or more financial institutions, although Harvard, Boston College and MIT have all picked up copies of the RFP. In addition, agencies soliciting RFPs include:

Mass. Highway Dept.	.....	Texaco
Registry of Motor Vehicles	.....	Autoinsurers/dealers
MBTA	.....	AAA
Mass. Film Office	.....	Sony
Massport	.....	ValueJet
Environmental Affairs	.....	General Motors
Lt. Governor's office	.....	MasterCard
Housing and Community Dev.	.....	Walt Disney

Not to be upstaged, Mayor Menino is seeking private firms for several city functions including: BRA (REIT, Texas Railroad Commission, Donald Trump); Boston Transportation Dept. (WalkBoston); and the Environment Dept. (E-Z Parking Co.).

Five Years Ago in The Boston Informer

No. 30

— Anniversary Issue —

April 1997

This is the 30th issue—five years—of The Boston Informer. The editors went inside The Boston Informer Archives Vault to research material for this anniversary issue and discovered that although there has been major change in Boston—the Ted Williams Tunnel opened, Roger Clemens left the Red Sox, the MBTA now opens the rear doors of buses—there is also a lot that hasn't changed.

When we looked at the very first issue of The Boston Informer (March–April 1992) and saw how much hadn't changed in five years, we thought it fitting to reprint and update, where possible, what was news then. Alfred Marshall apparently was right: "Progress must be slow." See the reverse to see how slow.

THE BOSTON INFORMER

No. 1 Newsletter for the Downtown, Waterfront, North End, Beacon Hill, South Station and West End March–April 1992

Welcome to The Boston Informer

This is the first issue of Boston's only easy-access resource to construction projects, planning initiatives, Central Artery updates, transportation changes, Boston Harbor activities, and more. Covering Boston's downtown, waterfront, Beacon Hill, West End, South Station, and North End, The Boston Informer will keep you up-to-date on what's going on in your neighborhood and will serve as a guide to finding out more about projects and plans that will affect you, whether you live, work or visit here.

The region is in the middle of a major recession and clearly not as much is going on as several years ago when Boston was truly a boomtown. Yet, there is a lot happening in the city now, from the early construction contracts for the Central Artery/Tunnel project to designing the new Federal Courthouse on Fan Pier.

As Boston's only newsletter focusing on issues in this geographic area, The Boston Informer will fill you in on events and graphic area. The Boston Informer will fill you in on the news issues of importance to you and that aren't covered by the newspapers. And The Boston Informer will do it in a concise, direct, hassle-free way.

TRANSPORTATION



The Central Artery is not the only thing happening with transportation. The MBTA is planning and construction directorate and the planning and construction directorate will affect how you get around in downtown Boston including major changes that are happening at North and South stations. And transportation is not just the MBTA—private bus carriers, taxi cabs, water shuttles, bicycles, and buses. Amtrak, all modes of transportation are planning, designing, and building new. The Central Artery/Tunnel project is forcing public transportation authorities and private companies to mobilize.



CENTRAL ARTERY/TUNNEL

Although the Central Artery/Tunnel (CA/T) project is one of the biggest projects in Boston now, it's not yet visible, both in terms of actual construction and information on upcoming construction, schedules, and planning. Boston's downtown, North End and waterfront areas will very soon get a taste of the future—Central Artery utility relocations are due to start in summer 1992. In addition to reorganizing a maze of utility lines, these early-action contracts also include reversing the direction of streets, removing an on-camp to I-93, and other related actions. How to deal with the substance for the Scheme Z Charles River crossing is still the subject of talk and negotiation, with funding the big question mark.



BOSTON HARBOR

The \$6 billion clean-up project run by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) is on schedule and within budget. (MWRA) is no longer the site of a jail, but a Deer Island is no longer the site of a jail, but a primary treatment plant. Sail Boston '92, an extravaganza of the Tall Ships on parade, will be an event of Fourth of July proportions. Be prepared for the onslaught of tourists and junkies July 11–16. Designing the Harbor continues for the construction of the Third Harbor Tunnel, an extension of the Turnpike. Some 90,000 cubic yards of Harbor sediments will be deposited in a pit built at Governor's Island in Logan Airport. Ideas about depositing material excavated from the landside ends of the tunnel instead of from the Harbor, at Spectacle Island and creating the park earlier than planned are being considered. New MWRA director Douglas MacDonald began in mid-February.

What's Up?

- 1** The first utility relocation work (contract C014A) will be done on the relocation of a 30-inch gas line along Purchase, Pearl, High, Batterymarch and Custom House streets. Key utility relocation contract 14C has been delayed and will not begin until late summer. Some minor work for contract 14B in the North End area will start mid-summer, but indecision about the Scheme Z Charles River crossing has delayed many of the key North End utility relocations.
- 2** Design of Aquarium station was on hold until the interface issues between the Central Artery project and the MBTA were resolved. The northbound Central Artery tunnel will pass directly above the Blue Line with the top of the transit tunnel serving as the floor of the highway tunnel. Plans are to extend the Aquarium platform across State Street and have entrances on both sides of State Street.
- 3** The New England Aquarium, after being forced for economic reasons to stay in its present quarters instead of moving into a state-of-the-art facility in Charlestown, is looking at ways to expand its facility on Central Wharf.
- 4** New Federal courthouse is being planned and designed for the Fan Pier site. The MBTA is designing an "underground transitway," using electric buses in a tunnel, that will run from South Station to World Trade Center that will serve the courthouse. Architect: I.M. Pei-Jung/Brannen.
- 5** The Custom House Tower, Boston's oldest "skyscraper" and air-rights project, is not likely to be transformed into the 340-room luxury hotel planned by the Beal Companies in the near future. The City bought the tower for \$11 million in 1987; it's now worth less than \$4.5 million. The lack of outside financing makes the City's offer of a bond issue useless.
- 6** The MBTA's Old Colony Restoration Project is being touted as a major Central Artery traffic mitigation measure. The Old Colony service, originally to be three branches, now looks as if it will be only the lines to Middleborough and Plymouth. The controversial proposed line through Hingham is on hold. This project is far from being a sure thing: although 50 percent of the almost \$600 million cost will be paid for by the state, the MBTA is counting on the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for the rest. The removal of one of the branches from the project significantly reduces the cost-effectiveness of the project, critical for FTA. And will this project—already at least two years behind schedule—relieve Artery congestion? Carrying fewer than 9,000 riders a day—fewer than the Mass. Ave. bus #1—the two lines won't be in service until 1995 (?)...
- 7** Believe it or not, the New Northern Avenue Bridge will finally be built. This new Massachusetts Highway Dept. bridge, originally planned in the 1970s, has been one of the slowest projects to get started. The bridge piers were built last year, and the contract for the superstructure was finally awarded in 1991. Designed by Ammann & Whitney, the contractor is Modern Continental. The bridge is expected to open in July 1994.

1992

...THE REASON YOU HAVE NOT BEEN NOTIFIED IN ADVANCE OF THIS DISRUPTION IS BECAUSE WE HAVE DECIDED THAT THIS DISRUPTION DOES NOT QUALIFY AS DISRUPTIVE IN THE SAME WAY THAT SUBSEQUENT DISRUPTIONS WILL BE DISRUPTIVE...



(F)UTILITY

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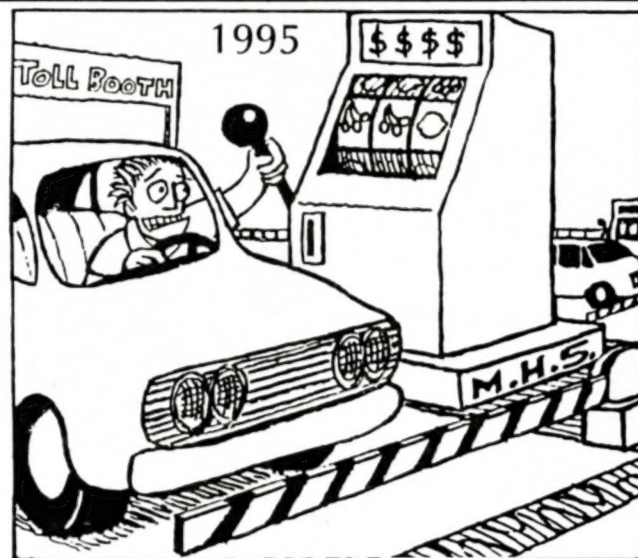
What's Up—Five Years Later (from other side)

- 1 Some of the "early action" utility relocations have been done. The gas line has been laid, but the C014A utility relocation contract is still going on—it seems indefinitely.
- 2 The MBTA's Aquarium station modernization will include longer platforms to accommodate six-car trains. However, construction won't be complete until 2004 at the earliest, thus being no use in increasing Blue Line capacity during Central Artery construction.
- 3 The New England Aquarium has started its expansion project on Central Wharf. How much it will expand is limited by fund-raising abilities.
- 4 The new \$219 million Federal Courthouse is now under construction, completion date summer 1998. The MBTA's underground transitway from South Station that will serve the courthouse has been seriously delayed (the MBTA is still debating whether to use trackless trolley or bio-diesel bus) and no opening date has been announced.
- 5 The Custom House Tower was bought by Marriott Vacation Club International and the Beal Co. and is being converted to 80 small (600 s.f.) one-bedroom time-share condominiums. Opening date is July 1997.
- 6 The MBTA's Old Colony Restoration Project was first supposed to open in 1993, then in 1996 as Central Artery mitigation, but it was pushed back (again) when the MBTA changed its proposed signal system for safety reasons. The Middleborough and Plymouth lines are now to open in September 1997, but the controversial Greenbush branch through Hingham is still plodding along through the design process.
- 7 The New Northern Avenue Bridge, named in memory of Evelyn Moakley, was completed, but access is still limited by Central Artery construction on Atlantic Avenue.

People Movers Redux

A survey of who was where, five years ago or so...

Ray Flynn was mayor
 Rick Dimino was Boston Transportation Dept (BTD) commissioner
 Rina Cutler was BTD commissioner
 Frank Tramontozzi was BTD commissioner
 Stephen Coyle, then Paul Barrett, headed the BRA
 Vineet Gupta (BTD) was at Boston Parks and Recreation
 Ed Burke was head of the Mayor's Office of N'hood Services
 Richard Taylor (Blue Cross) was secretary of transportation
 Buzz Constable was an EOTC undersecretary of transportation
 Bob Sloane (consultant) was EOTC undersecretary of transportation
 Mass. Highway Dept. (MHD) Mass. Dept. of Public Works
 James Kerasiotes (EOTC) was commissioner of the MDPW
 Laurinda Bedingfield (MHD) was MHD commissioner
 Bill Twomey (SmartRoutes) was Central Artery project director
 Peter Shields (Beacon Co.) was Central Artery mitigation chief
 Vincent Mannering (Boston Water & Sewer) was a state rep.
 John Haley (New Jersey) was MBTA general manager
 Paul Levy was the head of the Mass. Water Resources Authority
 Ilyas Bhatti (MHD) was MDC commissioner
 Jane Garvey (Federal Highway) was aviation director at Massport
 Susan Tierney (US Dept. of Energy) was environmental affairs chief



Financing the Central Artery Project

© Michael David Koch 1995 The Boston Informer



Don't miss an issue so you won't miss a beat!

Welcome to **The Boston Informer** where the goal is simple: provide concise, public information on construction projects, planning, and whatever else affects life in Boston.

The Boston Informer is published by ATC Information, Inc., six times yearly in Boston, Massachusetts. President: Anthony Casendino; vice-presidents, Anne McKinnon, Chris Fincham.

The Boston Informer is available by mail only. \$20.00 per year (cheap!). Questions? Telephone (617) 723-3584; fax (617) 437-1886; e-mail 103477.556@compuserve.com.

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A 12-Step Program for CA/T Management

1. Admit that you are powerless over cost and schedule.
2. Believe that only a power higher than yourselves (Speaker Finneran) can restore you to fiscal sanity.
3. Make a decision to turn your project over to the care of MassPike.
4. Make a searching and fearful inventory of the project.
5. Admit to the Federal Highway Administration, yourselves, and the legislature the exact nature of the problems.
6. Be ready to have the legislature remove all these problems.
7. Humbly ask the legislature to remove all shortcomings.
8. Make a list of all persons you have harmed and be willing to make mitigation to them.
9. Make direct mitigation to such people wherever possible except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continue to take inventory, and when wrong, promptly admit it.
11. Seek through lobbying to improve your contact with Speaker Finneran as you understand him.
12. Have a rude awakening as a result of these steps.

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You were asking...

Q. What is "Boston 400"?

A. We have no idea, so we asked "the man on the street" and here's a sampling of the answers:

- number of rooms at the proposed City Hall Hotel
- the number of statues in the city memorializing people no one's ever heard of
- Ted Williams' lifetime batting average
- the number of people in Boston who think the City Council is a critical deliberative body

Q. Will "Ice tea" (ISTEA) change to "Hot tea"?

A. If the highway lobby has its way, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act ("Ice tea") will be superseded by the Highway Only Transportation Efficiency Act ("Hot tea").

Q. What will happen to the old elevated Central Artery when the new underground highway is open?

A. Plans to recycle the steel structure into park benches and bike racks have been dropped. Instead, state officials, pressured to find new ways to finance the Central Artery project, decided to create a parking lot on the elevated structure. Claims the parking freeze prohibits new parking of this type were rejected when it was proved it would not be new parking—the Artery has been a parking lot for years.

Welcome to The Boston Misinformer,

the annual April Fool's issue of The Boston Informer! The goal is simple: provide concise public information on construction projects, planning initiatives, and whatever else affects living and working in Boston. Welcome to *The Boston Informer*!

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